# *"Wither Dispensationalism?"*

**"The report of my death was an exaggeration."—Mark Twain, *NY Journal*, 1897**

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in reference to the 2026 Midyear Meetings of the COP.

## I. Introduction.

These brief and cursory comments are offered neither as an exegetical nor theological critique of Reformed/Covenant Theology, which will be taken up within our COP studies this year. Rather, the focus of these assorted musings is directed towards shifting Evangelical perceptions with regard to Dispensationalism in recent decades, and the consequent phenomenon of its perceived decline within North America. This is but a bare and skeletal series of reflections upon those factors that seem to have undergirded and contributed to this aforementioned decline. We also have attempted to provide a response to various popular criticisms employed by advocates of the Covenant Theology perspective.

The last several years have seen much public analysis and debate related to both the history, origins, and purported demise of "classical" or "traditional" Dispensationalism. This includes several books written from both non-Dispensationalist and Dispensationalist perspectives, which would include the following:

- ***The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism: How the Evangelical Battle over the End Times Shaped a Nation*** (by Daniel Hummel, a non-Dispensational "Historic" Premillennialist);
- ***Discovering Dispensationalism: Tracing Dispensational Thought from the First to the Twenty-First Century*** (by Cory M. Marsh and James I. Fazio, both Dispensationalists).
- ***Dispensationalism before Darby: Seventeenth-Century and Eighteenth-Century English Apocalypticism*** (by William C. Watson, a Dispensationalist)

I would also mention an older study (1995) that is still widely read:

- ***When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*** (by Paul Boyer, a non-Dispensationalist cultural historian).

In concert with these literary efforts, the social media platform *YouTube* has also provided outlets for easily accessed thoughtful discussion over the issue of Dispensationalism's history, and the ongoing debate over its present decline. This would include the following:

- ***Thinking in Public: The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism***, an Aug. 23, 2023 conversation between Drs. Al Mohler and Daniel Hummel, from what seems to be an essentially "Historic" (or non-Dispensational) Premillennialist perspective. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3Qeny7YRhY);

- ***Dispensationalism - The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism - Why Albert Mohler is Wrong***, a Sept. 4, 2023 response to the Mohler and Hummel, from the *Bible and Theology Matters Podcast*, featuring Dr. Paul Weaver and nine other Dispensationalist scholars (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjYFw3sAmfc&t=5876s);
- Also of note is ***History of Dispensationalism: A Discussion With Cory Marsh and Daniel Hummel***, which is a Sept. 26, 2023 discussion hosted by *Eschatology Matters* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mX75dUEM2o).

## II. Dispensationalism's Appeal: A Matter of Sociology?

With reference to the above online discussions, several interesting attempts at historical analysis have emerged. For example, in their above referenced online conversation, Hummel and Mohler (non-Dispensationalists) argue that **various sociological factors peculiarly associated with the 1800's** (e.g., the Industrial Revolution) were conducive to the rise of various speculative and systematically ornate eschatological systems, as witnessed by the rise of Millerite-Adventism and its numerous offshoots (e.g., Russellism). People of this restless and disjointed modern industrial era were hungrily seeking for some sort of "scientific" system to add structure to their understanding of the prophetic Scriptures. Mohler suggests that the emerging contemporaneous popular phenomenon of Darbyist Dispensationalism should probably be related to this peculiar sociological milieu; it seemed to "fit" the tenor of the times. Other interpreters of American religious culture have also pointed to the unsettled nature of the American frontier as a contributing factor to the rise of "new" religious movements, with people being cut-off from the traditional established churches and their historic creeds.

In like manner, Dr. Hummel alludes to the fact that the astonishing appeal of the bestselling "Pop" Dispensationalism of the 1970's (e.g., Hal Lindsey) seemed to "fit" the tenor of the chaotic Cold War era from which it emerged and flourished.

**In response**, I would concur that men are products of their times, and that the question of whether or not various sociological factors or cultural circumstances have served to whet the public's appetite for certain ideas is a valid, legitimate, and important field of study when applied to the investigation of popular religious phenomena. For example, there was a certain "spirit of speculation" and "wildness in the air" of early 19th century America that led to the rise of the Campbellite/Restoration Movement and its various cultic/sectarian offshoots. This sort of historical/sociological analysis is invaluable for any student of the phenomenon of the cults who seeks to find the broad and unified connection that lurks behind the rise of American heterodoxy. **Ultimately**, however, the sociological question cannot be allowed to distract us from what must remain our **central and most basic concern with regard to Dispensationalism.** Namely:

> ***"IS this dogmatic theological system, Dispensationalism, an exegetically derived, and thus a genuinely SCRIPTURAL concept? Is it Biblical, and thus objectively TRUE… or is it FALSE?"***

As far as the sociological climate of a given era is concerned, we might observe that the Lord is certainly free to prepare human hearts through the sovereign shaping of historical/cultural events and circumstances, if it is in accordance with His ultimate purposes. If indeed the *"times were ripe"* for the embrace of certain ideas, this factor, in and of itself, does not render such concepts either true or false.

Obviously, the indiscriminate lumping of orthodox Dispensationalists into the same camp with heretical millenarian movements and sects is irrational, slanderous, and nonhistorical—but it does nonetheless represent a noticeable and prevailing prejudice within magisterial Protestant circles, as any Calvinistic Dispensationalist who innocently joins a Reformed social media group chat or book club will certainly testify (after being labeled by fellow group members as a "weirdo" or "cultist").

## III. "BUT ISN'T IT TOO NEW TO BE TRUE?"
## (Covenant Theology is "Historical," but Dispensationalism is "Novel.")

Covenant Theologians will routinely argue that Dispensationalism is a ***"Johnny-come-lately"***—a recent arrival in terms of overall Church History—the creation of a modern figure, **John Nelson Darby** (1800-1882), and his Plymouth Brethren Movement. It is further asserted that God's Church comfortably existed for eighteen centuries without Darby and his novel enterprise, and that the whole thing is therefore disagreeable to the concept of historic Christian orthodoxy. *"Too new to be true!"*

It is argued that Covenant Theology, however, has a much greater and more solid historical pedigree, with its basic premises (e.g., Replacement Theology, amillennialism, etc.) traceable at least back to late antiquity, and championed by people like Augustine, the veritable colossus of Late Patristic Theology. These underlying premises further dominated the "lion's share" of Church History (i.e., the 1,000 years of the Medieval Church), and were also embraced by those traditions that arose from out of the work of the great magisterial Reformers (i.e., the "High" Reformation of Luther and Calvin).

**Response**.

1. I am *also* suspicious of the "novel," and thus value the concept of *Historical Theology*, which is the result of centuries of practical scholarship and Spirit-directed debate amongst spiritually-gifted men of God—who are themselves gifts to the historic Body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13). Recall the motto of our COP:

   ***Prov. 27:17: "Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."***

   A mindset that is sensitive to centuries of ongoing conversation amongst God's People is antithetical to the speculative spirit of 19th century "Restorationism," which embraced a doctrine of Total Church Apostasy (*contra* Matt. 16:18) and thus gleefully jettisoned eighteen centuries of Christian theological dialogue and study—resulting in the rise of all manner of heresy as they "reinvented the wheel."

2. But while we must reject ***Restorationism*** (because the Gates of Hades can never prevail against the Church of God), we must nonetheless always be open to ***REFORM***. The Church *can*, *has*, and *continues* to collectively grow and mature in its understanding of the final and objective source of revelation, the Biblical witness. **Again**, our final concern is not whether the High Reformers taught it, but rather, ***"Did the PROPHETS and APOSTLES teach it?"***

3. **In terms of its historic pedigree**, Dispensational Premillennialism is on much firmer ground than Covenant Theologians will commonly entertain or admit. Without going into detail, we would note in passing the following items:

    a. **Chiliasm** (the belief in a literal 1,000-year earthly millennium) was the common *"theology du jour"* for the pre-Augustinian Ante-Nicaean Fathers.

    b. As Dispensationalist historians such as Marsh, Fazio, and Watson (see above) have adequately and thoroughly demonstrated, **ALL of the major Dispensational ideas, concepts, and presuppositions** were expressed within past ages (indeed, from the very beginning) ***long before Darby***—including some profound degrees of expression within certain Puritan/Separatist circles. Darby's genius, we could say, took the form of a **great systematic organizer—**as opposed to an out-and-out originator.

    c. **With the above in mind**, we might also observe that the systematic organization of today's brand of **Covenant Theology is ALSO a "Johnny-come-lately,"** from the perspective of overall Church History. Consider the following:

        i. The Christian Church begins on the Day of Pentecost, c. AD 30. **But the Reformation** (i.e., the Protestant Revolution) itself only shows up in the last quarter of Church History (c. AD 1517)!

        ii. **To be sure**, the central concepts and concerns of the Reformation (e.g., Justification *Sola Fide*, the questioning of Papal authority, etc.) show up much earlier—indeed, *throughout* Church History (including a lively expression amongst such proto-Reformers as Savonarola, Wycliffe, Huss, the Lollards, and the Waldensians, etc). But it must be admitted that a *systematically organized* and *highly detailed presentation* of these concepts awaited the emergence of the Reformers. **Would the Covenant Theologians therefore state that systematic Reformed Theology, like Dispensationalism, is *"too new to be true?"***

        iii. **Covenant Theology**, in its modern form, is still even *more* of a "Johnny-come-lately," awaiting its full formalized consolidation in conjunction with the systematic labors of 17th century Reformed/ Calvinist Scholasticism. **Would the Covenant Theologians therefore be willing to state that systematic Covenant Theology is also *"too new to be true?"***

4. **On Darby.** Modern Dispensationalists rightly respect J.N. Darby as an innovative thinker, systematic theologian, literalist exegete, and Bible-centered theologian. But Covenant theologians have a tendency to present Darby as a sort of "arch-heretic," and "evil genius" who "created" the "Dispensationalist error," having been influenced by various heterodox forces (especially the Irvingite Movement). A few notes in **response**:

    a. Darby was ***not*** under **Irvingite influence**. **Thomas Ice** nicely refutes this in an online article: *Alleged Irvingite Influence on Darby and the Rapture* (https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1125&context=

pretrib_arch). Indeed, Darby's literalism and futurism is *entirely* antithetical to Irvingite allegorization and historicism. Indeed, the basic historic relationship between the two is essentially as **opponents**. Whatever similarities that exist are due only to the use of a *common source*: the Bible!

- Incidentally, Thomas Ice's **Pre Trib Research Center** (https://www.pre-trib.org) consists of a veritable GOLD MINE of papers from top-flight Dispensational scholars and theologians—including several contributions from Dr. Whitcomb!

**b.** **Darby was never an ultimate "guru"** for later Dispensationalists—most of whom have never read even a single syllable his works! Furthermore, subsequent American Dispensational writers have from the beginning deviated from his theological analysis on a variety of levels—including his pervasive preoccupation with a severely anticlerical ecclesiology.

**c.** Darby was essentially an **orthodox, Bible-believing Calvinist** who has been terribly ill-used and dishonored by Covenant Theologians.

**d.** **Again**, basic Dispensational concepts and ideas did not ultimately **originate** with Darby; rather, he essentially deserves great credit as the first great modern **systematic organizer** of these ideas.

## IV. The Charge: *"Covenant Theology is for smart & culturally responsible people; Dispensationalists are hillbillies that care for nothing but their prophecy charts."*

### A. Neo-Evangelical Academic Snobbery and Opposition to Fundamentalism.

**Intellectual pride.** **Post-WW2 Neo-evangelicalism** (C. Henry & *Christianity Today*, Billy Graham, and Fuller Theological Seminary, etc.) portrayed late 19th and early 20th century Fundamentalism (and sometimes its oft-associated Dispensationalism) as a **divisive and isolated scholastic *ghetto*.** The same attitude, of course, was ultimately applied to Young-Earth Creationism.

Even back in 1964, Dispensationalist author Charles H. Stevens noted this following sad reality in *Focus on Prophecy* (Charles Lee Feinberg, ed.; p. 45):

> ***"TO PROFESS BELIEF in a literal return of Christ to the earth to reign over national Israel is to classify oneself in the category of the nonintellectuals and the simple-minded."***

- ***Response:*** NONE of these arrogant attitudes and intellectual pretensions are based upon an analysis of the actual academic attainment or proficiency of Dispensationalism's leading advocates; rather, such an outlook is based solely upon a pragmatic bending of the knee to the world and its smug prejudices. **It is sufficient for us** to remark that if unregenerates are amused by our belief in the Rapture and the 6-Day Creation Week and are disgusted by our stubborn adherence to Biblical denominational distinctives, ***then so be it***—God will still find a way to efficaciously reach down and save people!

**Cultural indifference?** Apocalyptic & eschatologically "obsessed" Dispensationalism was also blamed for conservative fundamental Protestantism's alleged isolation and inattentiveness to civic, social, cultural, and political concerns.

- ***Response:*** Historical FACT—There was no shortage of Dispensationalists who were involved in the "culture wars," social reform movements, politics, and civic concerns of the early 20th century during the "Golden Age" of American Fundamentalism—*long* before the advent of the Moral Majority in the late 1970's! The persistent neo-evangelical caricature and cliché that presents Dispensationalists as a people who are coldly indifferent to the affairs of this world and do little but clutch their prophecy charts while donning their Ascension Robes and idly staring into space while awaiting the Rapture (Acts 1:10-11) is a slander against many good people who have taken seriously the Great Command to "***love thy neighbor***" and have attempted to make a difference in this sad, broken world that is drenched with human suffering. But while this charge is a ridiculous assertion that is "unburdened by facts"— it has nonetheless undeniably gained a certain degree of traction within many circles, and is still part of the ongoing polemic against Dispensationalists.

**Despite being the target of these negative attitudes, Dispensationalism continued to outwardly thrive for decades, throughout Cold War America.** Indeed, we could say that it formed the basis for much of what the secular world *presumed* that most conservative Christians stood for, eschatologically speaking (e.g., Rapture, Antichrist, Tribulation, Christian Zionism, etc.).

- Some of this is undoubtedly related to the commercial of success of **"Pop Dispensationalism,"** such as Lindsey's ***Late, Great Planet Earth*** and LaHaye's ***Left Behind*** series of novels (and films). Lindsey's book was the best-selling non-fiction book of the 1970's—**being outsold only by the Bible itself!!!** LaHaye & Jenkins sold some 80 million "Left Behind" books—with no less than seven titles reaching Number 1 on the *NY Times* bestseller list!

- **One must wonder,** however, if the short-term success of the various expressions of "Pop Dispensationalism" entailed a certain *cost*, in the long-run. Without seeking to undermine the positive contributions of certain successful "Pop Dispensationalist" authors, we still might well ponder the following: "Did an entertaining and highly commercialized version of Dispensationalism eventually become a sort of cultural ***kitsch*** and anachronism that cultivated a cheesy and unserious image that lacked a certain spiritual *gravitas*?"

### B. *New Kids on the Block:* The Rise of "Progressive Evangelicalism."

The problems that we commonly associate with traditional Neo-Evangelicalism can be ***doubly*** applied to today's "**Progressive Evangelicals**," who are characterized by their obsessive cultural conformity, "woke" political agendas, doctrinal deconstructions, and basic disdain for an all-embracing Biblical Worldview. "Progressive evangelicals" are literally *absorbed* with seeking the world's intellectual acceptance. We should anticipate little support for Biblical Fundamentalism and traditional Dispensationalism from within these circles. **With the Millennial & Gen Z Evangelical culture rapidly moving in this direction**, we can perhaps ascertain yet another reason why Dispensationalism may well be in serious long-term decline in North America.

## V. Quick Responses to Various Additional Complaints & Accusations

### A. Dispensationalism is way too complex—you need a *chart* to figure it out!

- Is literal, straightforward Dispensationalism really any more difficult for the common man to understand than *Covenant Theology*—which offers an **allegorical hermeneutic** that demands that every time we see the word "Israel," we're to immediately think "the Church?" And how was the ancient Jew—or the common man of our day—to understand a system of interpretation that also demands that when we see the precisely described Millennial Temple of Ezekiel—laboriously dealt with in five highly detailed chapters (Ezek. 40-44)—as simply being "symbolic?" Symbolic of *what*, precisely?
- It took a brilliant guy like **Michael Scott Horton** some 216 pages to "introduce" the basic premises of a supposedly simple and self-evident Covenant Theology (*Introducing Covenant Theology*). It took **J. Ligon Duncan** 481 pages to do the same (*Covenant Theology: A Biblical, Theological, and Historical Study of God's Covenants*). Similarly, it took **Harrison Perkins** no less than 520 pages to "introduce" the subject in his *Reformed Covenant Theology: A Systematic Introduction*.
- The oft derided and ridiculed charts simply relate to the fact that we as human beings often tend to be **visual learners**. Hence, the symbolic Ordinances instituted by Christ!
- In terms of "**simplifying**" the End-Times scenario involving all of the diverse judgments and resurrections with respect to varying companies (as Amillennialism seeks to do): **Occam's razor** cannot be wielded at the expense of Biblical truth.

### B. Dispensationalism's innate Christian Zionism is "racist," and bad for the world. It has entirely skewed our foreign policy.

- In the past several years—particularly since the **Oct. 7, 2023** attacks emanating from Gaza—I have been considering how much of a potential connection and relationship there may be between the decline of popular Dispensational on the one hand, and the sudden upsurge in U.S. antisemitism, on the other. Initially, most of this emerged from the far Left (as witnessed in the protest demonstrations and campus assaults on Jewish students at some of our most prestigious universities). In the last year, however, we have seen an uptick in anti-Israel antisemitism amongst commentators of the **"Woke Right,"** including such personalities as Tucker Carlson, Steve Bannon, Nick Fuentes, Megyn Kelly, John B. Wells, and Candace Owens. Carlson in particular has become highly vociferous in his open attacks upon Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism (as witnessed in his outrageously adversarial interviews with Sen. Ted Cruz and Ambassador Mike Huckabee).

### C. Dispensationalism is incurably associated with sensationalism and Date-setting, and seems to readily lend itself to the pursuit of distinct prophetic applications for every major world event and recent news item…

- Sadly, we cannot deny that there have been astonishing abuses by self-identifying Dispensationalists in all of the above categories. And Satan has no doubt employed all of these to **undermine the credibility of the basic system**—which is why we must be ever-zealous in policing our own ranks. Our critics would much rather deal with the "pin-the-tail-on-the-Antichrist" antics of **Charles Taylor** (who for years identified the *Man of Sin* as former Spanish King Juan Carlos), or the anti-literal Kabbalist mysticism of **J.R. Church** (*Hidden Prophecies in the Psalms*), or the dating-setting of **Edgar C. Whisenant** (*88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*), or the salacious near-date setting of **Jack Van Impe** ("I think it could be in about, say, five years…") than they would with our more legitimate and sober scholars. **Has all of the above served to further the withering of modern Dispensationalism?**
- One of my favorite books in this regard is the now dated but nonetheless still helpful *Soothsayers of the Second Advent* (1984), by **William Alnor**.
- Incidentally, the most prominent date-setter of recent decades, **Harold Camping**, was a Reformed Amillennialist.

### D. Dispensationalism is historically aligned with the Easy-Believism of the "Free Grace Movement."

- This complaint refers to the frequent association of **Dallas Theological Seminary** and many of its luminaries with that particular point of view. There was (and still is) some levels of tension between the "Free Grace" position and the "Lordship" position of John MacArthur and his allies.
- **However, this is a straw man.** Despite the prominence of DTS in the Dispensationalist Universe, neither "Free Grace" nor "Lordship" are distinctly representative of traditional Dispensationalism. If Zane Hodges (Free Grace) is a Dispensationalist, so is John MacArthur (Lordship)! If Dallas is classified as a Dispensational school, so too is the Master's Theological Seminary.
- The same is true, with regard to **Calvinism and Arminianism**. *Both* dogmatic schools have strong and prominent Dispensationalist advocates.

## VI. Concluding Remarks: "So, just how *bad* is the present situation?

### A. The Bad News.

Some indicators are **very troubling indeed**, and point to signs of an alarming and definite decline…

First, all observable indicators inform me that the **overall drift of the culture** indicates that both **Evangelical Millennials** and **Gen Zers** have not yet "connected the dots," in terms of a profound, Biblically derived, all-embracing Judeo-Christian worldview. The deconstructive impulse and persistent wokeism that is presently entertained within youth-oriented ecclesiastical power-centers would seem to strongly indicate this.

**Speaking in terms of Evangelical "power-centers,"** "Big Eva" and its associated Big Conferences, Big Christian publishing houses, and Big CCM are increasingly at odds—and even often downright hostile—towards an uncompromising Biblical Fundamentalism that must necessarily provide the nursery for a distinctive dogmatic school of thought like traditional, hard-core, classical Dispensationalism.

The overly influential **mega-church power structures** are devoted to an indistinct and minimized sort of doctrinal message—which would view Dispensationalism as an *obstacle*, rather than as a source of benefit.

**Loss of academic prestige.** We have seen a decline in larger, **high-profile seminaries** that would dare to make classic/traditional Dispensationalism a major emphasis of their profile. The great era dominated by Talbot, Grace, and Dallas has faded; some of the older, distinctively Dispensationalist schools have softened and retreated from their original stance. All of this ominously points to the loss and deterioration of our central and prominent academic centers—which is a major handicap for any movement.

**Major Christian publishing houses** do not seem as interested as they once were in respectable, big name, high-caliber Dispensational scholars. The era in which Christian Publishing was dominated by such names as Feinberg, Pentecost, Ryrie, Walvoord, McClain, and Whitcomb has passed.

**In short**, the classic Dispensationalist movement is increasingly dismissed by the elite evangelical intellectual establishment—the leading "intelligentsia" and influencers.

**Significant theological rivalry** is not simply found in traditional Covenant Theology centers, but also from within "Progressive Dispensationalism" and "Historic" (non-Dispensational) Premillennialism.

While some undeniably positive benefits have emerged from the rise of the 21st century **"New Calvinism"** movement (a.k.a., ***"Young, Restless, and Reformed;"*** or ***YRR***)—on the negative side, this Movement it is often characterized by a sheer and unvarnished contempt for traditional, "unintellectual" Dispensationalism.

The contemporary impulse to **"return to tradition"** (as opposed to the Bible) is often misdirected towards an undue emphasis upon both **Patristic and Medieval theology and their practices**, and is marked by an extraordinary surge of interest amongst young people in such traditions as Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Anglicanism. Many of these young people were raised in or formerly associated with Dispensationalist Churches (e.g., **J.D. Vance**) This is a **symptom of a broader disease** that does not regard Dispensationalism as being either "historic" or "traditional"—*even though Dispensationalism was clearly taught by the Apostles!*

**B. Some words of encouragement (i.e., potential "Good News")…**

As Mark Twain observed in 1897, when false reports of his demise began to circulate, the reports of his death were somewhat exaggerated (Twain didn't actually die until 1910)! Yes, Classical Dispensationalism may be on the ropes…but it isn't dead yet!

1. There is *still* some **great scholarly work** being done—even if it is largely unheralded by the major publishing houses!
2. There are *still* many **mid-size** and **smaller fundamental Bible schools, seminaries,** and **Christian Colleges** that continue to uphold the old standards, and which are still having a significant impact upon the local churches—even if this isn't officially recognized by "Big Eva!"

3. **Some bigger schools**—whatever else their shortcomings may be—still publicly affirm their adherence to Dispensational doctrine—*at least on paper*—in terms of their formal professions and statements of faith. For example, both **Liberty** (the largest seminary in the US) and **Dallas** (the largest non-denominational school in the US) still *officially* affirm a Church/Israel distinction and the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic Covenant, and are still *officially* pre-Trib and pre-Mill.
4. While the mega-churches may have largely fallen by the wayside, this nation is still covered by a white garment of **smaller fundamental churches** that still follow the old paths, and which continue to proclaim the truth!
5. The decline we are speaking of may well be a decidedly **Western, North American phenomenon.** For example, in the above-mentioned YouTube response to Mohler and Hummel from the *Bible and Theology Matters Podcast*, one of the panelists, a representative from **Ethnos 360**, reports that he is *not* witnessing this trend in an alarming manner from within the Third World. This is good news—at least for *now.* We are, of course, conscious of the fact that toxic influences that *begin* in the West, regrettably, usually do not long remain *confined* to the West!
6. It was also observed within the aforementioned discussion that historically speaking, Dispensationalism was always a movement that found its chief impulse and vitality from within the ranks of the CHURCHES—as opposed to the seminaries.
7. **Lastly:** Jesus *is* coming back. Encouragement enough?

***Rev. 22:20b: "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.***